

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 CU-05 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-14 SCS-03 AID-20

HEW-08 SCA-01 SWF-02 DRC-01 /156 W

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R 011901Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8196

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAP, HO

SUBJECT: RELIEF EFFORT CONTROVERSIES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4144

1. AS THE EFFORTS TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE FIFI CONTINUE, THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIOUS FORCES INVOLVED IN RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION BECOME MORE APPARENT. THE MEDIA COVERAGE DESCRIBED BELOW REFLECTS THE INCREASING POLITICIZATION OF THE RELIEF PROGRAM.

2. THE FEDERATION OF HONDURAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (FEUH), IN A RESOLUTION PUBLISHED IN EL CRONISTA OF OCTOBER1, STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE OPERATION OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY (COPEN). FEUH ACCUSES COPEN OF INEFFICIENCY AND OF ACTUALLY BEING AN OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF GETTING RELIEF SUPPLIES TO THE NEEDY. THE STUDENTS URGE ALL

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ORGANIZATIONS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO PRESSURE COPEN INTO

GREATER EFFECTIVENESS. (FEUH IS THE GENERAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY BUT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF ITS OFFICERS ARE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST STUDENT FRONT, FRU.)

3. EL CRONISTA OF OCTOBER 1 PUBLISHED A LONG ARTICLE ABOUT THE CUBAN HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL TEAM OPERATING AT THE AGAS REFUGEE CENTER IN SAN PEDRO SULA. WHILE DESCRIBING THE CUBANS IN EFFUSIVE TERMS THE REPORT MAKES CRITICAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE GOH PROGRAM OF DISTRIBUTION OF INCOMING SUPPLIES. THE ARTICLE CONTAINS SUCH STATEMENTS AS "OUR REPORTER CONFIRMED THE PATIENCE AND AFFECTION OF THESE DOCTORS AND NURSES FOR THEIR PATIENTS AND THE PATIENTS ARE AMAZED BY THIS HUMANITARIAN ATTENTION."

4. THE NEWSPAPER WAR BETWEEN TIEMPO AND ITS MORE CONSERVATIVE COUNTERPARTS, LA NOTICIA AND LA PRENSA, CONTINUES AT A SUBDUED LEVEL. TIEMPO HAS PROVIDED VERY FULL AND LAUDATORY COVERAGE OF THE CUBAN MEDICAL TEAM'S WORK. NOTICIA AND LA PRENSA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE BARELY MENTIONED CUBAN ACTIVITIES, NORMALLY JUST INCLUDING CUBA IN LISTS OF DONOR COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, THEIR COVERAGE OF U.S. RELIEF ACTIVITIES HAS BEEN VERY EXTENSIVE. NOTICIA WENT SO FAR (IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TIEMPO'S FULL PAGE STORY ON CUBAN EFFORTS) TO RUN BANNER HEADLINE "U.S. HELP HAS BEEN FUNDAMENTAL IN EVACUATION" ALONGSIDE PHOTOS OF U.S. HELICOPTERS.

5. COMMENT: IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE RELIEF EFFORT BY VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WILL INCREASE. THIS CRITICISM, AS IN THE CASE OF THE FEUH DECLARATION, IS IN PART HIGHLY POLITICAL IN NATURE. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT SUCH CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES WILL BECOME MORE FREQUENT AS THE VARIOUS GROUPS ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION AND GAIN NEW SUPPORTERS.
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